

# Removal of Snowplow Hitching Mechanisms Required for Warm-Weather Months

## Change in Law:

Massachusetts's law has been amended (Ch. 149, Section 142 of the Acts of 2004) to require the removal of certain snowplow hitching mechanisms from vehicles during the period of May 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. General Law Chapter 90, Section 19K is now in effect and non-complying vehicles may not be legally operated on public ways during this period.

## What is Required:

Between May 15 and October 15 of each year, vehicles equipped with a plow (unless exempt) shall be required to have removed the plow and hitching mechanism used with the plow. The hitching mechanism includes the lift cylinder and lift arm. (The lift cylinder is the hydraulic cylinder that raises and lowers the lift arm. The lift arm supports the plow blade).

## Exempted Hitching Mechanisms:

- (1) Vehicles equipped with an apparatus that allows the hitching mechanism to be folded flat leaving no protruding surfaces, shall only be required to have the plow itself removed if the hitching mechanism is in the folded flat position while the vehicle is in operation.
- (2) Hitching mechanisms which were permanently affixed through welding or other means prior to July 1, 2004 (the date of enactment). (Permanently affixing a hitching mechanism after that date is prohibited and a violation is subject to fine and revocation of registration).

## If it Snows During the Period:

If snowfall occurs before October 15 or after May 15, vehicles subject to this act may be re-equipped with the plow and any apparatus necessary for clearing snow but must abide by this law within 72 hours of the conclusion of the snowfall.

## Exempted Vehicles:

This act does not apply to any vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of more than 26,000 pounds nor to state, county or municipally owned or operated vehicles.

## Penalties:

For operating a vehicle in violation of this act, a warning for a first (1<sup>st</sup>) offense; \$250 fine for a second (2<sup>nd</sup>) offense; \$500 fine and revocation of the registration for a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) offense and the registration will not be reinstated until the vehicle is in compliance. A reinstatement fee will apply.

## Complying Mechanisms; Regulations:

The Registrar is in the process of compiling a list of complying fold-flat hitching mechanisms which leave no protruding surfaces and will publish that list on its website ([www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv)) when available. The Registrar is also drafting regulations to verify compliance for persons cited for a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) offense.



Massachusetts Registry of  
Motor Vehicles Advisory

**Questions?** Contact Vehicle Safety &  
Compliance Services at 617-351-9345